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GROUP OF EXPERTS ON THE UNITED
NATIONS PROGRAMME ON PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE
Thirteenth meeting
27 May-4 June 1997
Item 3 of the provisional agenda

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Annotated provisional agenda

1. Opening of the session.

2. Election of officers.

The meeting is expected to elect a Chairman three Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur.

3. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.

4. Substantive items for discussion:

The substantive items of the provisional agenda have been determined on the basis of recommendations made by the General Assembly in its resolution 50/225 on public administration and development.

(a) Development of a sound governance environment;

Governance is a concept associated with the legitimate exercise of authority to manage a country's affairs in the interests of the people. In this sense, it incorporates, in addition to the traditional theme of sound public management, broader issues such as the interaction between the State and society, the build-up of social consensus and reconciliation, and the relationship between political transition and institutions. This topic will cover such issues as leadership building, civil society empowerment, political transition, and peace, reconciliation and stability. (document ST/SG/AC.6/1997/L.2)

5. Review of the United Nations programme in public administration and finance:

(a) Programme review and future orientation;

The Meeting will broadly review the activities under the programme and examine the changes that will be necessary in light of the discussion on substantive items for strengthening the role of the United Nations in public administration and development for the benefit of interested developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

The Meeting will also review the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001 and the proposed programme of work for the biennium 1998-1999. (document ST/SG/AC.6/1997/L.9)

(b) Implementation of the United Nations information clearinghouse;

Since the establishment of the programme in public administration, the United Nations has continuously performed the role of clearinghouse for information and research in the field of public administration. The resumed fiftieth session of the General Assembly provided the forum and the instrument for the revitalization of the clearinghouse function, reflecting the increasing demand for information taking advantage of current technology. The Meeting will review the status and plans for the implementation of the United Nations information clearinghouse function. (document ST/SG/AC.6/1997/L.10)

(c) Coordination with other United Nations bodies and the specialized agencies.

The Meeting will also review the public administration and finance programmes and activities of other United Nations bodies and specialized agencies and suggest approaches and modalities for better coordination. In that connection, an informal inter-agency consultation and working group will be convened on 3 June 1997. (document ST/SG/AC.6/1997/L.9)

6. Adoption of the report of the Thirteenth Meeting of the Group of Experts.

In accordance with established practice, the Secretary-General will submit a report on the Thirteenth Meeting of the Group of Experts to the Economic and Social Council at its 1997 regular session. The Meeting is therefore expected to adopt a report on its discussions and recommendations for submission to the Secretary-General.

(b) Enhancing the professionalism, ethical values and image of the public service;

The renewed expression of interest in administrative ethics indicates a growing concern on the part of many governments to address this issue squarely and the realization that, unless effective measures are taken to ensure administrative ethics, the outcomes of reforms in public administration will be in jeopardy. This topic will cover such issues as human resources development and professionalism in the public service, fundamental elements of a civil service code of ethics, transparency, combating corruption, and enhancing the image of the public service. (document ST/SG/AC.6/1997/L.3)

(c) Redesigning the State for social development;

In the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development and in the outcomes of other recent international forums emphasis was placed on the need to implement profound changes in economic and social policies in order to counteract the tendency towards deterioration in the global social situation. This topic will cover such issues as the integration of social and economic policies, public management reforms to enhance the capacity of the State to deliver basic social services, social safety nets, including traditional forms of solidarity, decentralization and communities/people's participation in the formulation of national social policies, formation of human capital and social management. (document ST/SG/AC.6/1997/L.8)

(d) Creating an enabling environment for private sector development;

It is increasingly recognized that an effective enabling environment is a necessary factor in the promotion of entrepreneurship and privatization for economic growth and sustainable development. In that context, this topic will examine such issues as the enabling environment for private sector development, legislation and institutions for protection of property and enforcement of contracts, power, transport and communications infrastructure, credit policy and institutions, including microcredit, protection of vulnerable groups, and promotion of disadvantaged groups, public enterprise privatization, restructuring and reform; and contracting out of government activities. (documents ST/SG/AC.6/1997/L.6; ST/SG/AC.6/1997/L.7)

(e) Strengthening governmental capacity in the mobilization, management and accountability of financial resources.

An important aspect of sound governance is ensuring the highest level of efficiency and effectiveness in the mobilization and management of all resources available to government in order to accomplish its purposes - including financial, information and human resources. This topic will cover such issues as stabilization policies and public sector management, public expenditure management, domestic and external resource mobilization, tax policy, and tax administration and international taxation. (documents ST/SG/AC.6/1997/L.4; ST/SG/AC.6/1997/L.5).